

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 08824 01 OF 02 131727Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 IO-13
MCT-01 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 /077 W
----- 112159 /47

O P 131608Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2508
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY 183
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
CIA WASHDC
COMSIXTHFLT
COMPHIBRON SIX
COM THREE FOUR MAU
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 8824

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE
SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION DECEMBER 11-13

REF: BEIRUT 8801 (DTG 101522Z DEC 76)

1. SUMMARY. FOLLOWING INCIDENT INVOLVING CAMILLE CHAMOUN
IN WHICH TWO PEOPLE WERE KILLED, NEW INTRA-CHRISTIAN RIVALRIES
ERUPT AS MILITIA ARM OF NATIONAL LIBERAL PARTY WITH-
DREW FROM JOINT CHRISTIAN MILITARY COMMAND. PHALANGE
PARTY REGIONAL CONGRESS HELD IN NORTH MATN DEC 11; AT
KATAEB/PHALANGIST MILITARY CEREMONY DEC 12 BECHIR GEMAYEL
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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 08824 01 OF 02 131727Z

SAID SOLUTION TO PALESTINIAN PROBLEM SHOULD PRECEDE

PHALANGE TURNOVER OF WEAPONS. CABINET EXPECTED APPROVE BY DEC 15 "MINISTERIAL DOCUMENT" FOR PRESENTATION TO PARLIAMENT. SOME EXPECTING CONFLICT OVER PALESTINIAN WEAPONS TURNOVER AT QUADRIPARTITE MEETING SCHEDULED FOR DEC 14. ISRAELI PRESS REPORTS NO SIGN OF PALESTINIANS IN BORDER AREA, THOUGH BEIRUT RIGHTIST RADIO REPORTING HEAVY CONCENTRATIONS IN HASBAYA AND MARJAYUN. REJECTION FRONT BOYCOTTED PLO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE DEC 12, BUT EXPECTED WILL PARTICIPATE IN UPCOMING PALESTINIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS. NATIONAL MOVEMENT DELEGATION EXPRESSED CONCERN TO SARKIS DEC 11 OVER WHO CONTROLS ASF IN BEQAA. ANOTHER ATTEMPT ON EDDE'S LIFE. "VANGUARDS" OF LEBANESE ARMY REMAIN OPERATIONAL FROM THE AKKAR TO SOUTHERN BEQAA. GOVERNMENT MINISTERS SEEKING RECONSTRUCTION AID FROM FRANCE. NORMALIZATION CONTINUES IN POLICE ACTIVITIES, BANKING, AIR TRANSPORT, AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. CONFLICT IN THE RIGHTIST CAMP. DANY CHAMOUN REPORTED TO ASF DEC 10 THAT THREE PASSENGERS IN DATSUN CAR FIRED AT HIS NATIONAL LIBERAL (NLP) PARTY'S BARRRACKS IN AYN AR-RAMMANAH, KILLING ONE PERSON AND INJURING TWO OTHERS. ANOTHER INCIDENT OCCURRED DEC 12 IN ASHRAFIYA INVOLVING NLP LEADER CAMILLE CHAMOUN WHEN PHALANGIST MILITARY LEADER PIERRE SOKHAN ATTEMPTED TO PASS CHAMOUN'S CONVOY ON HIS MOTORCYCLE. VERBAL ARGUMENT WAS FOLLOWED BY EXCHANGE OF FIRE RESULTING IN DEATHS OF SOKHAN AND CHAMOUN'S CHAUFFEUR. LATER, AT 2230 DEC 12, EXPLOSIONS OCCURRED IN NLP OFFICES AT TWO LOCATIONS IN ASHRAFIYA. IN ADDITION, PHALANGISTS AND NATIONAL LIBERALS REFUSED TO MEET PHALANGIST ULTIMATUM FOR RETURN OF TEN PHALANGIST HOSTAGES BEFORE 2130 DEC 12. AT 0130 DEC 13, "TIGER" MILITIA ARM OF NLP ANNOUNCED THEIR WITHDRAWAL FROM JOINT CHRISTIAN MILITARY COMMAND. MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR LATE DEC 13 IN ATTEMPT TO RECONCILE THE FEUDING PHALANGISTS AND LIBERALS.

3. PHALANGIST YOUNGER LEADERS SPEAK OUT. AT REGIONAL PHALANGE PARTY CONGRESS FOR NORTH MATN DEC 11, ATTENDED BY 600 PARTY MEMBERS, AMIN GEMAYEL DECLARED THERE NO RPT NO POSSIBILITY OF DIALOGUE BETWEEN PHALANGISTS AND COMMUNISTS, PPS, OR PRO-IRAQI BAATH PARTY. GEMAYEL CLAIMED
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PAGE 03 BEIRUT 08824 01 OF 02 131727Z

US IS ATTEMPTING "THE INSTALLATION OF A MILITARY DICTATORSHIP IN LEBANON WHICH WOULD SIMULTANEOUSLY CONTROL BOTH THE PALESTINIANS AND THE LEFTISTS." ON DEC 12 BECHIR GEMAYEL WAS PRINCIPAL SPEAKER AT A KATAEB/PHALANGIST MILITARY CEREMONY ATTENDED BY SOME 10,000 PEOPLE AND PIERRE GEMAYEL, PERE KASSIS, AND CAMILLE CHAMOUN. SOME 3,000 NEW PHALANGIST MEMBERS WERE SWORN IN. BECHIR GEMAYEL DECLARED: "WE ARE NOT DISPOSED TO TURN OVER OUR WEAPONS UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS,

PARTICULARLY OF THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM."

4. CABINET ACTIVITIES. PRIME MINISTER AL-HUSS AND DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER BOUTROS TO MEET EVENING DEC 13 WITH PRESIDENT SARKIS TO PUT FINAL TOUCHES ON MINISTERIAL DOCUMENT EXPECTED TO BE APPROVED FORMALLY BY COUNCIL OF MINISTERS ON DEC 15 AND WHICH WOULD BE PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT AS EARLY AS DEC 19. DOCUMENT EXPECTED TO BE BRIEF, BUT TO BROADLY LAY OUT TIMETABLE FOR RECONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES. NO DECISION YET MADE TO REQUEST EXTRAORDINARY POWERS FROM PARLIAMENT. NEW CABINET WIDELY ACCLAIMED BY VARIETY OF POLITICAL FIGURES, ALTHOUGH HARD-LINE RIGHTISTS REMAIN RESERVED, PARTICULARLY CHAMOUN AND ABU ARZ OF GUARDIANS OF THE CEDAR. CHAMOUN REMAINS OPPOSED TO GIVING NEW GOVERNMENT EXCEPTIONAL POWERS UNTIL NEED FOR SUCH FULLY EXPLAINED.

5. QUADRIpartite COMMITTEE AND ARMS COLLECTION. QUADRIpartite SAUDI-SYRIAN-KUWAITI-EGYPTIAN COMMITTEE WILL MEET UNDER PRESIDENT SARKIS DEC 14 TO DISCUSS WEAPONS COLLECTION. AMBASSADORS OF KUWAIT AND SAUDI ARABIA PRESENTED THEIR CREDENTIALS TO PRESIDENT SARKIS DEC 13. COMPROMISE SOLUTION, REPORTED IN EARLIER SITREPS, EXPECTED FOR PLACEMENT OF ARMS UNDER DUAL CONTROL OF BOTH VARIOUS MILITIAS, INCLUDING PALESTINIANS, AND ASF. L'ORIENT-LE JOUR REPORTS NATIONAL LIBERALS HAVE ALREADY GIVEN ASF LIST OF HEAVY WEAPONS AND ARE PREPARED TURN THEM IN BEGINNING DEC 14. BEIRUT POLITICAL CIRCLES ANTICIPATING OPINION DIFFERENCES WITHIN QUADRIpartite COMMITTEE ON QUESTION OF PALESTINIAN HEAVY WEAPONS, WITH SAUDI ARABIA AND SYRIA ON ONE SIDE TAKING HARD LINE AND KUWAIT AND EGYPT ON THE OTHER TAKING SOFTER LINE.

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PAGE 04 BEIRUT 08824 01 OF 02 131727Z

6. THE SOUTH. BEIRUT PRESS NOTES ISRAELI PAPERS REPORTING NO SIGNS OF FEDAYEEN RETURN TO THE ARQUB, IN SPITE OF EARLIER REPORTED MOVEMENTS OF PALESTINIANS SOUTHWARD THROUGH THE BEQAA (SEE SITREP DEC 9-10). LOCAL NEWS AGENCY AKHBAR LUBNANE SAYS ISRAELIS CONTINUE TO INCREASE PATROLLING ACTIVITY IN BORDER AREA WHICH RECENTLY VISITED BY NUMBER OF HIGH-RANKING ISRAELI OFFICERS. AGENCY ALSO REPORTS ESTABLISHMENT OF TEMPORARY ISRAELI ROADBLOCK IN LEBANON NEAR ADAYSSE. PHALANGE RADIO REPORTS SABOTEURS BLEW UP BRIDGE ON ROAD BETWEEN HANNIN AND DIBL NEAR ISRAELI BORDER. RADIO ALSO CLAIMS HEAVILY-ARMED PALESTINIANS LOCATED IN AREA OF HASBAYA AND MARJAYUN. LEFTIST SOURCES ANNOUNCED ENTRY OF ASF DETACHMENT INTO VILLAGE OF MAGHDOUCHE ON HILLTOP OVERLOOKING SIDON AND PALESTINIAN CAMP OF AYN AL-HELU.

CANADIAN CHARGE DROVE WITH EASE ALL THE WAY TO NAQOURA NEAR
ISRAELI BORDER ON COASTAL ROAD DEC 12. FOUND QUIET
EVERYWHERE, INCLUDING AT TYRE WITH TRAFFIC HEAVY.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 8824

7. PALESTINIANS. PFLP LEADER DR. HABBASH SAYS THAT,
ALTHOUGH REJECTION FRONT IS NOT PARTICIPATING IN
CURRENT PALESTINIAN CENTRAL COUNCIL MEETINGS IN
DAMASCUS, FRONT WILL PARTICIPATE IN UPCOMING
PAALESTINIAN NATIONALCONGRESS "TO INFORM THE ARAB
MASSES AND THE REVOLUTIONARIES AND PROGRESSIVE FORCES
OF THE TREASONABLE CONSPIRACY AGAINST THE PALESTINIAN
CAUSE." FATAH COMMANDER ABU IYAD, WHO ALSO DID NOT ATTEND
DAMASCUS MEETINGS, ARRIVED IN BEIRUT DEC 12 FROM CAIRO.

PALESTINAINS REGARD SYRIAN REFUSAL TO ALLOW PLO
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER ABDEL-JAWAD SALAH TO ENTER
SYRIA AS BLATANT EFFORT TO PRESSURE THE CONGRESS.
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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 08824 02 OF 02 131738Z

8. NATIONAL MOVEMENT PURSUES MODERATE OPPOSITIONAL
LINE. NATIONAL MOVEMENT DELEGATION LED BY LEFTIST
DEPUTY ALBERT MANSOUR SAW PREESIDENT SARKIS DEC 11 AND
CLAIMED THAT SYRIAN ASF SOLDIERS IN THE BEQAA AND THE
AKKAR NOT RESPONSIVE TO SARKIS BUT TO DAMASCUS. GROUP
ALSO OBJECTED TO ALLEGED CAMPAIGN AGAINST PRO-IRAQI
BAATH PARTY IN THE BEQAA AND WARNED AGAINST DANGER OF
"PARTITION MANEUVERS." MANSOUR LATER REPORTED THERE
WAS "PERFECT UNDERSTANDING" BETWEEN DELEGATION AND
SARKIS.

9. ANOTHER ATTEMPT ON EDDE'S LIFE. RAYMOND EDDE WAS
SLIGHTLY WOUNDED IN THE LEG WHEN HE WAS SHOT AT IN
FRONT OF HIS HOME FROM ACROSS THE STREET AROUND MIDNIGHT
DEC 11-12. NUMEROUS POLITICAL FIGURES HAVE EXPRESSED
CONCERN, INCLUDING SEVERAL MEMBERS OF NEW GOVERNMENT.

10. "VANGUARDS" OF LEBANESE ARMY. WE UNDERSTAND FROM
DATT VISIT TO UNIT'S HEADQUARTERS IN THE BEQAA DEC 13
THAT "VANGUARDS" OF LEBANESE ARMY ("TALEH") STILL
OPERATING AS A VIABLE FORCE IN LOCATIONS FROM THE
AKKAR TO THE SOUTHERN BEQAA. "VANGUARDS", WHICH
REPORTEDLY STILL NUMBER 3,000, INCLUDING 100 OFFICERS,
REMAIN NON-DENOMINATIONAL. "VANGUARD" COMMANDER AT
RAYAK AIRBASE TOLD DATT HE COOPERATING ONLY WITH
LEGITIMATE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT (WHICH IS NOW PAYING
UNIT) AND ASF. IT CLEAR "VANGUARDS" EXPECTED TO BE
ABSORBED INTO RECONSTITUTED LEBANESE ARMY.

11. RECONSTRUCTION. PUBLIC WORKS MINISTER BIZRI
RETURNED TO BEIRUT FROM PARIS DEC 11, AND HE EXPECTED
TO DISCUSS PLANS FOR RECONSTRUCTION OF BEIRUT CITY
CENTER DEC 13 WITH PRESIDENT SARKIS. ANOTHER MINISTER,
FARID RAFAEL OF FINANCE AND JUSTICE, IS DEPARTING FOR
PARIS TO SEEK RECONSTRUCTION ASSISTANCE. LEBANESE
SPECIAL ENVOY TO US, GHASSAN TUEINI, DEPARTING BEIRUT
DEC 13 FOR WASHINGTON (SEPTELS). FRANCE HAS OFFERED
15,000 UNIFORMS TO GEDARMERIE BRANCH OF INTERNAL
SECURITY FORCE. BRITISH AMBASSADOR WAKEFIELD OFFERED
PRESIDENT SARKIS BRITISH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE BUT NO
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PAGE 03 BEIRUT 08824 02 OF 02 131738Z

FINANCIAL HELP.

12. SIGNS OF NROMALCY. "SQUAD 16" ELEMENT OF ISF REAPPEARED IN HAMRA AREA DEC 11, ASSISTING TRAFFIC POLICE. RADIOS SANIYA AND AMSHIT NOW BOTH BASING NEWS BROADCASTS ON DISPATCHES FROM NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY, THOUGH MEDIA UNIFICATION PROBLEMS PERSIST. BANK OF AMERICA ANNOUNCED IT WILL REOPEN DEC 14 IN TWO LOCATIONS, ONE EACH IN WEST AND EAST BEIRUT. CARGO FLIGHTS BEGAN LANDING AT BEIRUT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT NIGHT OF DEC 10-11. CRUDE OIL FROM SAUDI ARABIA BEGAN ARRIVING THROUGH TAPLINE TO ZAHRANI ON DEC 10. PPT SAYS 84 TELEPHONE LINES NOW FUNCTIONING BETWEEN BEIRUT AND DAMASCUS. FIRST SHIP TO ARRIVE OFFICIALLY AT BEIRUT PORT EXPECTED DEC 17. TWO SHIPS , ONE LEBANESE AND ONE FOREIGN, ALREADY ARRIVED UNOFFICIALLY AND OFF-LOADED BY HAND. NUMBER ONE SONG ON BEIRUT'S HIT PARADE AND WHICH PLAYED REPEATEDLY DEC 12, BEGAN WITH WORDS: "THE GOOD OLD DAYS ARE BACK."
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Message Attributes

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